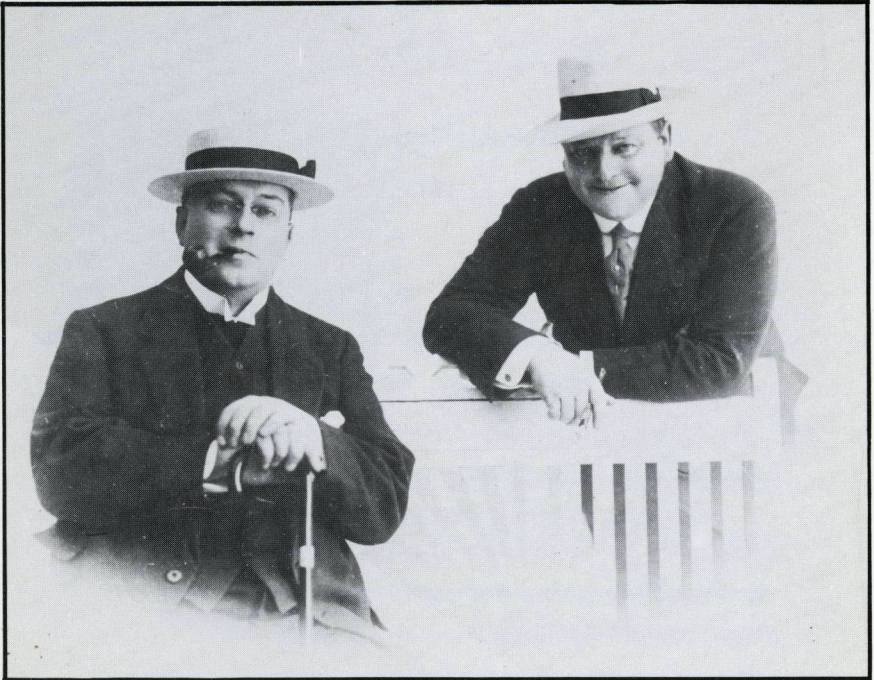


No. 190 February 1993

# Hillandale

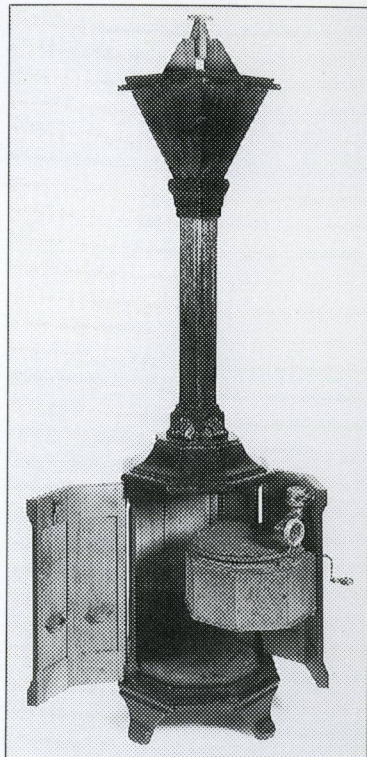
NEWS





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# HULLANDALE NEWS



The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society

**Founded 1919**

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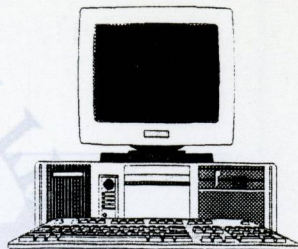
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**Issue Number 190, February 1993**

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## EDITOR'S DESK



### Dictaphone conversions

Martyn Dowell of Southampton should be glad that his plea, in the last of issue of *Hillandale News*, for more information on converting Dictaphones to playing commercially recorded cylinders has been answered. Len Watts has written a detailed article with illustrations on his handiwork. This is published in this issue, on pages 171 to 173.

### Annual General Meeting 1993

Phil Bennett, Secretary of the Midlands Group, has advised me that the Group have agreed to host the Society's AGM at the Group's 25th Anniversary Phonofair on Saturday 25th September 1993. The date of 24th October as published in the last issue was incorrect. Full details of this event will be published nearer the time.

### Annual Subscriptions 1993/94

The Treasurer has advised me that these are now due and he would appreciate prompt payment as this would help to curb our administration expenses.

### London Meetings

I have received several letters and telephone calls supporting Juliet Adams in her plea for more details to be given about the talks advertised in the Forthcoming Meetings in London section. I must add my support and would ask for all speakers to furnish Geoff Edwards with brief synopses of their talks so that he can pass them on to me to publish in *Hillandale News*.

### Theodore Edison

Theodore Edison died on 24th November 1992 in the U.S.A. He was the last of that line of the family and the last male. There will be an appreciation/obituary in a future issue of *Hillandale News*.

Please note that material intended for inclusion in *Hillandale News* must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue**.

Hence the deadline for the **April** issue will be **15th February 1993**.

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Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor.



# BILLY WHITLOCK AND VERA: 90 YEARS OF ENTERTAINING

by Dave Homewood

As I settled in my chair for the evening about to watch a couple of hours television, the 'phone rang. On answering, a gentleman introducing himself as Reg said he knew of my interests in phonographs and gramophones, and asked if I would be willing to have a look at a phonograph owned by a friend of his. The machine, I was told, was not in working order and that Vera the owner would love to have it restored to working condition. I said that I would have a look at it but could not promise anything. Arrangements were made for me to go and see her with Reg

and just before I was about to put the 'phone down he said "I think you will find her interesting as she worked at Edison-Bell from 1915 and was with them for 18 years. Maybe you have heard of her father" he said, "his name was Billy Whitlock." On hearing this, the day that we had arranged for my visit could not come quick enough. In the meantime I had made a long list of questions to ask her.

The day finally came and I picked up Reg and we drove to Vera's house. Upon opening the door we were greeted by a very sprightly, cheerful lady who made me feel



The Edison-Bell orchestra with, from the left, front row: Harry Bluff, Billy Whitlock, Edward Hesse? and Johnston; middle row: 2nd right Victor Opferman (the band's German leader); back row right: George Tyler



welcome straight away. I looked at the phonograph (a Gem) which only needed a few things to make it complete again and brought back to working order; so I agreed to do the work for her.

"Reg tells me you worked for Edison-Bell," I ventured, "Oh yes" said Vera and the rest of the evening was spent with her while she told me the story of her father and the story of her early days at Edison-Bell.

Most of us when sorting through 78s have at sometime or other come across records by Billy Whitlock. He was one of the "bread and butter" artists (see *Hillandale News* No.159 June 1987 page 219). The different thing about Billy was the fact that he wrote and played his own compositions which all had copyright and brought in extra income as well as recording in the studios. Billy had a life full of ups and downs, travelling to many countries. The one country he most wanted to visit was America. He was born in Cheltenham in 1874, the son of an eminent pianist. When he was quite young he joined the Salvation Army as he wanted to play the drums, later deciding to travel and visit different countries. Sea travel did not agree with him and when reaching Bombay he slipped ashore and did not bother to get back on board when the ship was due to sail. Instead, he joined an opera troupe where he met his future wife. They toured India for five years and married in Calcutta.

Coming from a wealthy family he learnt that a small fortune had been left to him and so he returned to England. One trouble Billy had was keeping money and found it very soon went. In order to earn a living he was encouraged by his wife to write popular melodies and songs; by this time he was a very versatile musician able to play almost any musical instrument.

In 1904 he joined the Moore & Burgess Minstrels and also started recording for Edison-Bell and many other labels, becoming famous for his laughing songs, bell

solos and descriptive records. Some of his titles were: *The Laughing Friar*, *The Merriest Man Alive*, *Laughing All The Day*, *Johnson's Laughing Song*, *Sweet Chiming Bells*, *Coronation Bells*, *Pretty Pond Lilies*, *Big Ben* and *Billy Whitlock's Wedding* - descriptive. He became a very busy man, writing and playing with the Edison-Bell band and orchestra. In fact, looking at the Edison-Bell 5½" and 6" diameter export list you will find that 35 out of a hundred titles were by Billy. He was also working under many different names such as Dudley Roy, R. White, Len Ward, W. W. Whitlock and W. Whitlock.

He teamed up with Charles Penrose, another laughing-song specialist (of *Laughing Policeman* fame - a tune Billy had written words to many years earlier). They toured on variety as *The Two Old Sports* which by all accounts brought the house down. Their act consisted of two well-to-do gentlemen sitting down for a convivial evening drink and gradually getting 'one over the eight' and telling funny tales and laughing at one another with their infectious laugh. The two men did not have much time for one another outside their work but the money rolled in fast and with Billy, went equally fast, on his great passion for cars. He bought them as often as women bought hats in those days - Tri-car, de-Dion and later, Bentley and Lagondas, in fact the faster the better. Often he would try to beat the train from London to Brighton and once during the First World War he got arrested for speeding; he was thought to be a German spy fleeing the country, and ended up spending the night in prison.

When public taste changed to dance bands, films and radio becoming popular, Billy found it increasingly difficult working in variety. Slowly the Halls were closing down and eventually Billy found himself out of work, and down at the bottom of the pile again, so he took on any jobs that came along, such as car-park attendant, night



watchman, in fact anything that would give him an income. Fortunately he kept up his bell practice, which was to pay off later on.

Many years later two American disc jockeys, Gene Rayburn and Dee Finch, had found an old Edison-Bell record of Billy Whitlock playing *Scotch Hot Polka* written by him in 1904. It was such a catchy tune they thought it might go down well with modern radio audiences so they contacted the Decca Record Company here in Britain to find out if Billy was still available to allow a modern recording. With quite a bit of difficulty he was traced through his daughter, Vera, to a little lodging house where he was living, drawing only his old age pension. Guy Lombardo, the famous American band leader, had heard the old record and decided that he liked it and wanted to do an orchestral version with vocal refrain. The title was changed to *Hop Scotch Polka* and the Cromwell Music Co. was formed in America to publish the sheet music with words written by Carl Sigman and Gene Rayburn. Billy again found himself in the recording studio after many years absence, now at 75 playing a tune he had written some 40 years earlier!

The tune was a great success going straight to number one in America. It was decided to try it in Britain, where it was to prove even more of a success. The royalties from this latest "hit" were saved and his dream trip to America was planned with his son-in-law who was also his business manager. However his son-in-law was taken ill and they were unable to go. (Meanwhile *Hop Scotch* was enjoying popularity.) Unfortunately Billy never reached America as he died a little while later on January 26th 1951.

His daughter, Vera aged 15, started at Edison-Bell in 1915 straight from school, keeping ledgers, working her way up eventually to sales lady at the showrooms in Cranbourn Street, off Piccadilly. There she

sold Decca gramophones to the B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). The officers would come in, choose gramophones and records and have them posted out to the forces. During the First World War, she left Edison-Bell to "do her bit" and joined the Ministry of Munitions (MoM), and stayed with them until the end of the war. Just before she left she took part in a concert party called *The Momers* which was her first introduction to concert work and she carried on from that working in the day-time and entertaining in the evening as Vera Penna, Soubrette and Comedienne, at Frascati, London and cabaret around the country. Throughout her career she worked with sixteen concert parties in theatres and prisons, also as an actor/manager and finally a producer of her own show which ran for 5 years and consisted of 10 artists. She and her husband moved to Eastbourne, Sussex in 1954. Vera carried on working becoming a founder member of the Sussex Music Hall Society which still have monthly shows in Eastbourne.

She has just recently had her 92nd birthday and is still actively involved with the Society. Since my first visit I have been to see her several times and always she has another story to tell; what a marvellous link with the past!





Billy Whitlock and Charles Penrose dressed up for their variety act The Two Old Sports



Vera's mother taken in Hong Kong in 1892



### Vera at an early age



Vera



# AND THE AWARD FOR THE BEST GRAMOPHONE GOES TO.....

by Howard Hope

One of the nice 'spin-offs' of having a specialist shop like mine is the chance to supply machines and a certain amount of expertise to the Media. In recent years there has been a distinct move to greater and greater historical accuracy in films and television, away from the glaring anachronisms often perpetrated in the past. C.L.P.G.S. members would be cheered to know just how much research goes into 'properties buying' these days, and how much soul searching when the director's romantic ideas are not met by the demands of history! If you are like me, you sit up and pay attention when a machine appears on the screen and try and identify it as it hovers tantalisingly in the background half hidden by the heroine's head! Sadly, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, and once we have spotted a bad case of 'time-warp' the rest of the film may be spoiled for us. I will never forget seeing a well known Hollywood actor step down from a stage-coach with a 1907 Columbia BQ Crown Graphophone under his arm as he arrived in town. The trouble is that while you and I are cringing at this faux-pas there will be an early arms specialist squirming at the sight of the guns on the hero's belt which look fine to us but terrible to him. The poor BBC used to be besieged by bird watchers who identified birds on film soundtracks which were inappropriate either to the location or season in question. After one such complaint a producer stood on his honour and insisted the sound was taken on location, and a bird was found to have re-colonised a beach as a result of a detective series being aired...But I digress.

My title refers, of course, to the Oscars that I have been deprived of for the simple lack of a category to win. Take "Chariots of

Fire", for instance. A good film with some great acting, but did you spot the Senior Monarch with the green horn in John Gielgud's office at Oxford? When I did, I got a surprise, because as far as I was concerned I had forgotten lending my machine to a company called Enigma Productions a year or so previously. The hire agreement rarely gives the eventual film title, and so I was quite taken aback in the cinema when my machine came on the screen. The same team of John and Anne Mollo 'dressed' the remake of the Tarzan story "Greystoke". Here there are three machines to spot, a Columbia Q in the explorers' tent at the beginning, the famous Senior Monarch, now with a brass horn, in a 'dancing' scene and a Gramophone Company gold-plated special machine for the export market appears in a London hotel scene. By the way, the Monarch also doubled (this time with a wooden horn!) as Shackleton's in Anglia TV's "The Last Place on Earth", and has appeared in a sherry advertisement.

Two or three years ago there were two blockbuster films out at the same time about the Far East in its recent history. One was "The Last Emperor", directed by Bertolucci with a glimpse of a Zonophone Cadogan for added zest, and the other Stephen Spielberg's "Empire of the Sun", with no less than four horn gramophones on a heap of used furniture. The script called for them to be destructible, so you will be pleased to know that they were faked from old and new parts. They didn't have to travel far, though in this case 'Japan' was relocated in Southern Spain.

Rarely are machines called on to actually work on screen, for even if they did, the sound balance with speech and other



noises would be very difficult to control. Instead the motors are run, but taped music is added at the desired level, and this element can therefore be experimented with at a later date.

Another source of irritation for enthusiasts is the ridiculous way in which machines are sometimes handled on the screen. It's not as if there were any great technology involved. We have all seen acoustic arms placed on the wrong side of the turntable as if there were any reason why things should have been different then from now. A welcome change came on a recent New Year when "The Woman in Black" was shown. The plot called for a young solicitor in 1910 to handle a dictation machine of the period properly. He did so with aplomb as if absolutely familiar with the machine. In fact he was trained to operate the 1905 Edison by the studio on relayed instructions from our home and very well he did it, too.

Other missed Oscars include the "Priest of Love" (did you know D. H. Lawrence owned a Parlophone portable?), "Agatha", in which Dustin Hoffman had an HMV 511 at his disposal and a detective film where the crew, sensitive to collectors, built a dummy HMV 109 to be smashed up in a gang raid, leaving the 'real' one unharmed - a sort of stunt double-spring.

Television has made a fair amount of use of our machines, spread between advertising and entertainment. As I already mentioned, the excellent film on Shackleton sought the correct machine for the great explorer, but Amundsen, too, took a horn machine on board, and his diaries tell us that it had a brass horn. We decided that as a Scandinavian team, they might have had a German machine, and so we equipped him with a suitable example. By this time the props department were enjoying themselves and decided to make Mrs Shackleton the proud owner of an Edison Standard, and who was I to disagree? Sandeman port thought that a mahogany intermediate Monarch would

stimulate Christmas sales a few years ago and one nostalgia record company, surprise, surprise, plugged pop classics with a Model D Pathéphone.

By far the best prop hire story, however, concerns a Spillers Meaty Chunks advertisement, filmed at the Goldhawk Road Studios near Shepherd's Bush. The theme of the three short adverts. was to be Three Famous Dogs enjoying Meaty Chunks. The dogs were to be Nipper, an Irish Wolfhound (the Mascot of the Irish Guards) and the trendy Dulux Dog. The filmers had discovered that a real Berliner looked far too small alongside any of the suitable Nipper look-alikes that they had auditioned; so they asked what alternative machines they might use. I called Society member Dave Williams and asked him if they might borrow his 10" turntable 'big' Berliner - the first Junior Monarch. He was agreeable, but there was a reasonable pre-condition: he wanted to accompany it just to see it got careful treatment. Now there was a further complication, Dave had just broken his leg at football and was on crutches! When we arrived by taxi, an incredible sight met us, as the room was full of Jack Russells and their owners, all furious because they had not understood that although they were all to be paid for the day, only one would have his or her doggie starred. Mayhem ensued. the 'winning' dog was finally made to look into the horn by means of a miniature loudspeaker hidden in the leather elbow and wired to a microphone literally spoken into by 'His Master'. On camera the little dog put his entire head in - right up to the ears. Sadly the advert was made for the US market and was not shown here.

And the one time when I wish I had no place on hire directories? That is when I receive a call from yet another amateur dramatic company staging "Pygmalion". Lord, I wish that Shaw had never set pen to paper when that call comes!



## SIX INTO ONE DOES GO

by George Taylor

In the early days of recording, classical music meant almost entirely opera and opera meant individual popular arias. A few instrumentalists bucked this trend and one of the most popular was the violinist Jan Kubelik (1880-1940). He was a child prodigy, giving his first public concert playing a concerto by Vieuxtemps at the age of eight. He was probably at the height of his popularity in the first decade of this century. Thus we find Kubelik as the only non-singer recording in the famous G&T Red Label series of 1902 and he is the only instrumentalist in the prestigious series of Fonotipia 13¾ inch records a little later. For both series he made two recordings; and in each case one of these recordings was of the Sextet from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, arranged for solo violin, not even a piano arrangement.

During the nineteenth century, many a minor composer earned his crust by arranging popular operatic pieces for instrumental combinations - particularly popular seemed to be flute or clarinet and piano. In the time before radio and recording such arrangements allowed opera to be brought into the home, as it were, or at least, experienced vicariously on a modest concert platform.

The *Lucia* sextet was arranged by the French composer Léon de Saint-Lubin (1805-1850), who was himself a violinist. Not exactly a familiar name nowadays (he does not even get an entry in the *New Grove*), he nevertheless composed two operas, five violin concertos, a quantity of chamber music including nineteen string

quartets, apart from party pieces such as the *Lucia* arrangement. He lacked originality but possessed a solid craft of composition. Virtually none of his music is now in print, and even eighty years ago, the only pieces to be found were a string quintet, an arrangement of Beethoven's *Adelaide* for unaccompanied violin and his Op.46 *Fantasia über Lucia di Lammermoor* for unaccompanied violin. Why the German title? The publisher was German; and indeed Saint-Lubin spent most of his professional career in the German-speaking parts of Europe. After filling various positions as a theatre violinist, he pursued further studies with Spohr, another violinist/composer. He was concertmaster at the Josephstadt Theater in Vienna from 1827 to 1830 and then held a similar position at the Königstheater in Berlin (1830-1847). He died in Berlin.

Though my instrument is the viola, I was keen to hear the *Lucia Fantasia*, and cast around for a recording. The only recordings in the 1992 classical catalogue are Kubelik's 1902 and 1905 efforts. Not that these are the only recordings ever made. It was recorded by one Michael Zacharewitsch in 1916 for HMV (B 578), by Vasa Prihoda for Edison (Diamond Disc 82225, about 1921) and by von Reuter (Polydor 95184). I have found no later recording in LP catalogues - not even by Perlman. Not exactly a popular piece, it seems.

So it was back to Kubelik on CD. He records it on a 10" disc in 1902, but takes a 13¾" side in 1905. In 1902, he recorded



only the first half of the work but I presume that the performance on Fonotipia is more or less complete. The work is a technical tour de force, lots of double stopping and left-hand pizzicato, the sort of thing that was much in fashion around the turn of the century, but is now less in vogue.

The 1902 G&T session is interesting. It was arranged by Kubelik's English agent, apparently as a private session, with records to be pressed for the agent's exclusive use. Five sides were recorded, one of which has not survived. Two sides were issued commercially as G&T Red Labels; neither of the surviving unpublished records (the agent's copies) is the other half of the Saint-Lubin piece, and one wonders whether the missing fifth side is indeed the second half. By

the way, poor Kubelik didn't stay on his Red Label pinnacle very long - his two 1902 G&Ts were downgraded to black label. Maybe that's why Fonotipia lured him away, to become (for the time being at least) his sole recording company.

#### **The records**

1902 G&T G.C. 7957, matrix 2703b

1905 Fonotipia 69010, matrix xxxph 283

#### **Acknowledgements**

Paul Cleary helped me with information on records other than those by Kubelik, and your Editor kindly supplied me with some details of the 1902 G&T session.

## **WELL DONE PETER MARTLAND!**

**by Tom Stephenson**

Hearty congratulations are due to our Chairman, Peter Martland, on receiving his History Doctorate (PhD Degree) from Cambridge University recently. Peter's scholarly 80,000-word thesis is based on an organisation superficially familiar to all of us, but which has so far been totally overlooked by the academic community: The Gramophone Company Ltd.

Tracing the Company from its earliest roots in the embryonic North American recorded sound industry, Peter's Business/Economic History follows the Company from its establishment in London in 1897 through to the end of the First World War. However, this is no mere chronological record of dates and events; but rather a detailed examination of the people and politics, finances and forays, competitors and crises, artistes and activities which built the Company into an international, market-leading organisation. All of these diverse threads had first to be carefully unearthed, analysed, and then skilfully woven together.

Peter's research extended beyond the recognised sources (such as the EMI Archive, the Smithsonian Institution and West Orange) into very original areas. For example he tracked down and interviewed members of the Berliner family; the son of one of the Company's first European Branch Managers; and the daughters of John McCormack and Fred Gaisberg: oracles of the highest calibre indeed.

Peter achieved all of this in just 3½ years. This achievement is especially remarkable when one learns that he left school at the age of 16 to become a Printer's Apprentice, later had a successful career in Social Work - and only entered higher education in his mid-30s.

We are indeed fortunate in having such an erudite Chairman. Well done Peter!



# CONVERTING THE DICTAPHONE TO A PHONOGRAPH

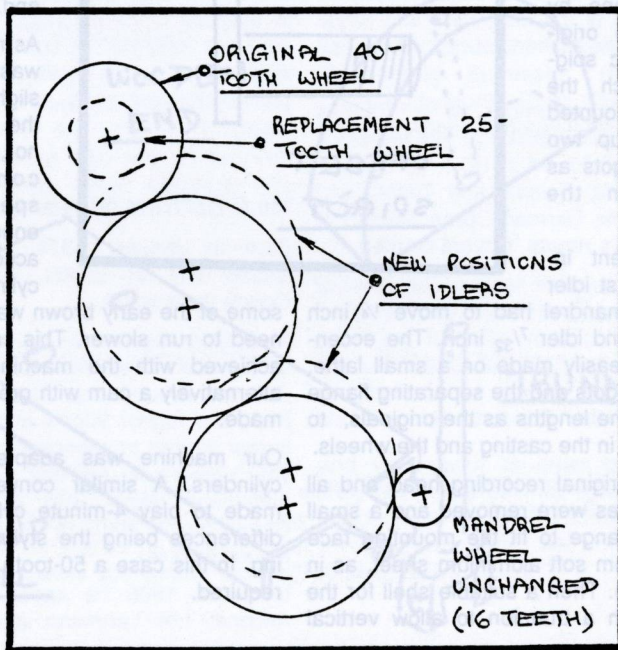
by Len Watts

Further to the article and pictures concerning the conversion of a "Dictaphone" for playing 2-minute cylinders, which appeared in the October 1992 issue of *Hillandale News*, some mechanically-minded readers may like to know details of the conversion, so here goes.

There are three modifications which need to be made. They are: (1) altering the gearing to the feed-screw so that the carriage advances at the correct rate; (2) mounting a modern pick-up cartridge wired for vertical response and fitted with a 2-minute stylus; (3) removing the sprung ridges from the mandrel.

Regarding (1), the "Dictaphone", and, I assume, other makes of cylinder dictating machines, cut their recordings at 160 threads per inch, so the first task is to alter the gearing driving the lead-screw so that the carriage advances at the rate of 100 threads per inch (TPI).

The "Dictaphone" lead-screw has 64TPI and the original gear ratio between mandrel and lead-screw is 2.5 to 1. To accommodate ordinary cylinders of 100TPI the gear ratio will have to be altered to 1.5625 to 1 ( $1\frac{9}{16}$  to 1). This alteration was achieved by having only one new gear made.





The diagram (a) shows that in the original set-up the mandrel had a 16-tooth gear driving a 40 on the lead-screw (via two idler wheels) giving the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 ratio mentioned above. By simple arithmetic it was evident that a 25-tooth gear replacing the the 40 would do the trick. Consequently we had a clockmaker cut us a 25-tooth wheel; actually he used the original 40-tooth wheel cut down as there was enough "meat" on it.

This just left the problem of meshing the gears. As shown in the diagram the gears are not all in line, so it was possible to shift the two idlers to mesh with the 25-tooth gear. This was done by removing the original concentric spigots on which the idlers were mounted and making-up two eccentric spigots as indicated in the sketch (b).

In the present instance the first idler next to the mandrel had to move  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch and the second idler  $\frac{7}{32}$  inch. The eccentrics can be easily made on a small lathe, the off-set spigots and the separating flange being the same lengths as the originals, to suit the holes in the casting and the wheels.

For (2) the original recording head and all the accessories were removed and a small tunnel with flange to fit the mounting face was made from soft aluminium sheet, as in the sketch (c). Then a suitable shell for the cartridge, with a trunnion to allow vertical

and horizontal movement, was fitted in the wooden end of the tunnel. The original lifting lever for the reproducer was quite easily coupled to the pick-up shell.

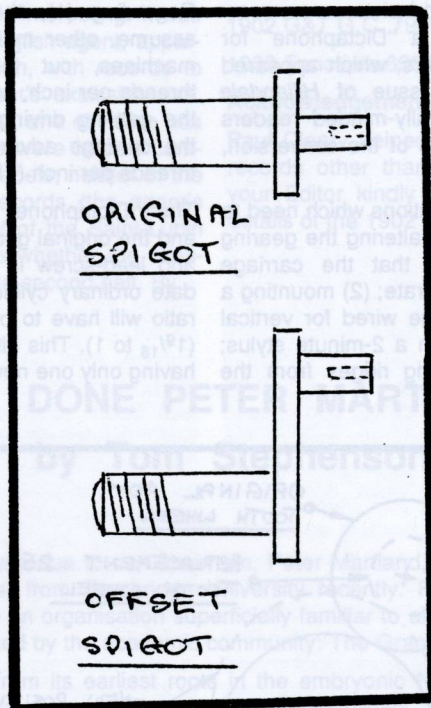
The sprung ridges (3) in the mandrel were removed as we felt there was a danger of

bursting our precious records; but it was found that the mandrel, although having the correct taper, was slightly smaller than that of an ordinary phonograph. The difficulty was overcome by a layer of insulating tape carefully wound round the mandrel. Alternatively a thick paper sleeve would achieve the same end.

As regards speed, it was found that by slight adjustment of the existing governor, the built-in cam controlling the speed gave just enough variation to accommodate most cylinders, although

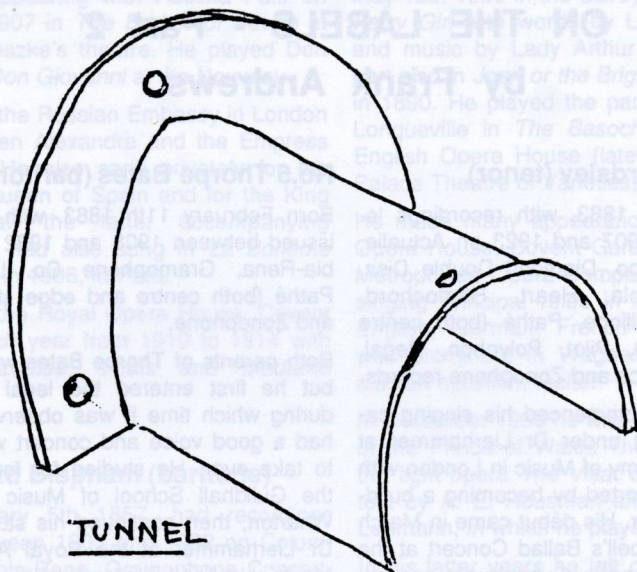
some of the early brown wax records would need to run slower. This could possibly be achieved with the machine's rheostat, or alternatively a cam with greater lift could be made.

Our machine was adapted for 2-minute cylinders. A similar conversion could be made to play 4-minute cylinders, the only differences being the stylus and the gearing. In this case a 50-tooth wheel would be required.

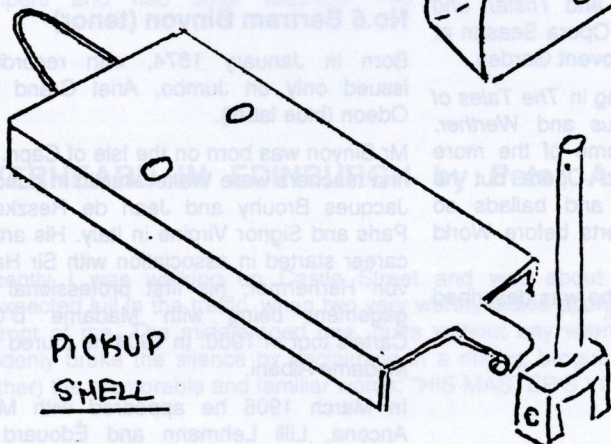
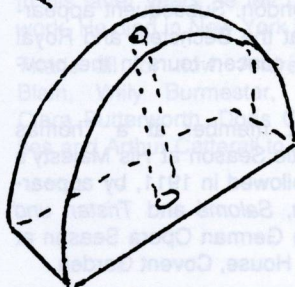


...his achievement is especially remarkable when one is ... the age of 15 to become a ... Apprentice, later had a successful career in Social Work - and only entered higher education in his mid-30s. We are indeed fortunate in having such an erudite Chairman. Well done Peter!





WOODEN  
END



TRUNNION



## MORE PERSONALITIES BEHIND THE NAMES ON THE LABELS - Part 2

by Frank Andrews

### No.4 John Bardsley (tenor)

Born June 10th 1883, with recordings issued between 1907 and 1923 on Actuelle, Columbia, Dacapo, Diamond Double Disc, Edison Amberola, Heart, Homochord, Homophone, Kalliope, Pathé (both centre and edge start), Pilot, Polyphon, Regal, Rena Double-Face and Zonophone records.

John Bardsley commenced his singing career by studying under Dr Lierhammer at the Royal Academy of Music in London with his income supported by becoming a building trades worker. His début came in March 1907 in a Chappell's Ballad Concert at the Queen's Hall, London. Subsequent appearances followed at the Bechstein and Royal Albert Halls with concert tours in the provinces.

He was a cast member at a Thomas Beecham Operatic Season at His Majesty's Theatre, to be followed in 1911, by appearances in *Elektra*, *Salomé* and *Tristan und Isolde* during the German Opera Season at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

In Opera Comique she sang in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Die Fledermaus* and *Werther*. His recordings took in some of the more popular arias from Grand Opera but he mainly sang the songs and ballads so prevalent at Ballad Concerts before World War One.

At one point in his career he was described as "The Singing Bricklayer".

### No.5 Thorpe Bates (baritone)

Born February 11th 1883, with recordings issued between 1908 and 1922 on Columbia-Rena, Gramophone Co. Ltd., HMV, Pathé (both centre and edge start), Regal and Zonophone.

Both parents of Thorpe Bates were singers but he first entered the legal profession during which time it was observed that he had a good voice and concert work began to take over. He studied for four years at the Guildhall School of Music under Ed. Wharton, then continued his studies under Dr Lierhammer at the Royal Academy of Music. He filled professional engagements in festivals in Birmingham, Norwich, Sheffield and Hereford. In London he appeared with the Queen's Hall Choral Society's promotions and sang at Chappell's Ballad Concerts.

### No.6 Bertram Binyon (tenor)

Born in January 1874, with recordings issued only on Jumbo, Ariel Grand and Odeon (blue label).

Mr Binyon was born on the Isle of Capri. His first teachers were Walter Austin in London, Jacques Brouhy and Jean de Reszke in Paris and Signor Virgine in Italy. His artistic career started in association with Sir Habet von Herhermer, his first professional engagement being with Madame D'Oyly Carte's tour in 1900. In 1904 he toured with Madame Albani.

In March 1906 he appeared with Mario Ancona, Lilli Lehmann and Édouard de



Reszke at the Nouveau Théâtre and followed by appearing with Adelina Patti on May 25th 1907 in *The Barber of Seville* at Jean de Reszke's theatre. He played Don Octavio in *Don Giovanni* at the Nouveau.

He sang at the Russian Embassy in London before Queen Alexandra and the Empress of Russia. He also sang privately for the King and Queen of Spain and for the King of Portugal, the latter accompanying Binyon. He had also sung in *La Bohème* with Melba, in 1906, in Paris.

He was at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden each year from 1910 to 1914 with roles in *Louise*, *Thaïs* and *Madame Butterfly*.

### **No.7 David Bispham (baritone)**

Born January 5th 1857, had recordings issued between 1903 and 1922 on Columbia, Columbia-Rena, Gramophone Concert, Gramophone Monarch, Pathé edge start and Rena Double-Face Records.

Bispham was born into a Quaker family in Philadelphia who were associated with the early settlement of that place. An amateur musician, he went to Italy and studied with Lamperti and had other teachers. His

operatic début took place in England on May 13th 1890 in the Savoy Theatre in *The Ferry Girl* with words by Lady Devonshire and music by Lady Arthur Hill. He had a part also in *Joan or the Brigand of Bluegoria* in 1890. He played the part of the Duc de Longueville in *The Basoche* at the Royal English Opera House (later re-named The Palace Theatre of Varieties).

He made many appearances in the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and with the Metropolitan Opera Company in New York, singing principal roles in Grand Opera in English, German, French and Italian. He was prominent in Wagner roles. He was also an excellent reciter.

In December 1906 he was at the re-opening of the Prince of Wales Theatre, London in the light opera *The Vicar of Wakefield* with text by A. E. Housman and music by Liza Lehmann, in which he played the title rôle.

In his latter years he left opera for concert work. He died in New York in 1921.

That's all for now. Andrew Black, Helen Blain, Willy Burmester, Robert Burnett, Clara Butterworth, Doris Carter, Amy Castles and Arthur Catterall to follow.

## **OVERHEARD IN EDINBURGH by Peter Adamson**

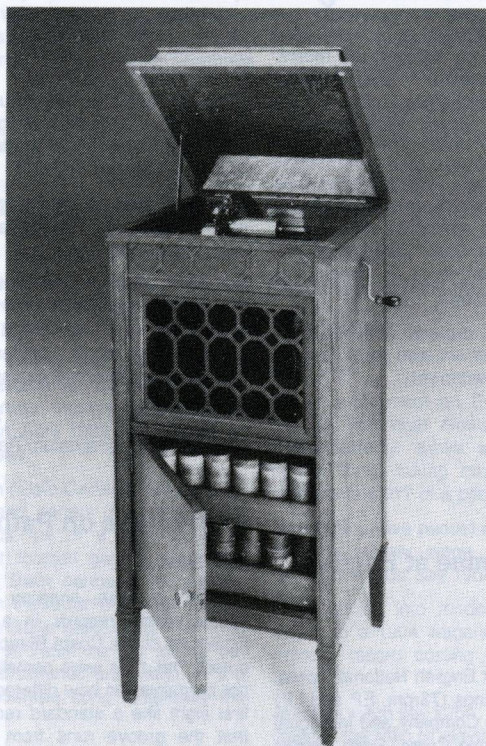
Recently I was walking up Castle Street and was about to cross over during an unexpected lull in the traffic, when two very worthy ladies approached, crossing diagonally in front of me. The middle-aged one, quite without any warning or further explanation, suddenly broke the silence by declaiming in a ringing brogue (to her obviously deaf old mother) the memorable and familiar words: "HIS MASTER'S VOICE!"



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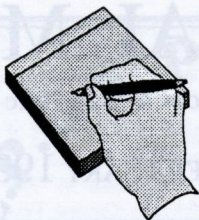
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## LETTERS



### Billy Williams

Dear Chris,

I am delighted that Ernie Bayly enjoyed my recent publication on Kingfisher Cassettes of Billy Williams and Fred Godfrey: *The Regal Years (1911-1914)*, which was reviewed in the October issue of *Hillandale News*.

I would be grateful if you could advise readers that the air mail price of this double-cassette set is **\$30.00** (Australian currency). Funds should be remitted by International Money Order or Bank Draft (made out in Australian currency). Bank notes in British and American currency are acceptable.

The set has been very well received here in Billy's homeland and overseas sales are also most encouraging. There is hope for the world yet!

Kind regards,

Peter Burgis (for Kingfisher),  
Port Macquarie, Australia

### The Baylis Programme at English National Opera

Dear Editor,

Clare Colvin, the Archivist at English National Opera, and I are looking for recordings (78rpm, EP and LP) of the Sadler's Wells Opera Company and individual artists like Heddle Nash, Joan Cross, Edith Coates and Sumner Austin who sang for us through the 1930's and 40's. We would also be delighted to find any (spoken word) recordings by our foundress, the indomitable Lilian Baylis.

As many C.L.P.G.S. members will know, Sadler's Wells Opera Company was the predecessor of ENO. Clare is now managing the vast archive and we are looking for recordings which will go into the permanent collection at Lilian Baylis House in West Hampstead. It seems incredible, but true, that ENO owns no copy of a recording ever made by the company or its artists when it was still at Sadler's Wells Theatre in Islington.

If any C.L.P.G.S. members have recordings that they could donate to ENO we would be delighted to receive them. If members would like to sell recordings it maybe that we could find some funds to buy

them. We do hope that we might begin to track down the considerable number of recordings, with C.L.P.G.S. help.

Yours sincerely,

David Sulkin, Co-director Lilian Baylis Programme at English National Opera

### 13<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" Fonotipias

Sir,

It was gratifying to read your reviewer's comments on our issue of 13<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" Fonotipias from the Harold Wayne Collection. May I add a few points for the sake of clarification?

There was of course no intention to mislead concerning completeness. The full text of the cover did not seem misleading.

The matrix numbers are precisely as on the records; the XXX usage seems to have been used only haphazardly and two could not be read without damaging the labels. Incidentally O was used for 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" discs but only one example is known to me.

Yours faithfully,

Eliot B. Levin, Symposium Records

### Help please on Pathé records!

Dear Editor,

A friend of mine, knowing of my interest in 78s, spotted some records in a car boot sale in the hinterland of the Costa Blanca. It was clear from the outset that they were something different but I had not bargained on how different! Although they look at first sight like a standard record, I soon discovered that the groove runs from inside to out and an examination of the "Avis Important" on the original sleeves showed that they should be played at 90 to 100rpm.

The sleeves have Disque Pathé in bold letters but the records themselves have their titles and other details engraved into the shellac and filled with gold. One disc is 5226 No.1 and 2 being two sides of *The Poet and Peasant Overture* conducted by Amalou. It also carries number 5606 in a diamond which I think may be a registration mark. The second disc is 3381 and 3383 *The Song of the Toreador* and *The Damnation of Faust* both featuring Charles Renaud. This one has what I take to be a tax stamp and matrix numbers 59298-G.R. and 48172-G.R. It also has what looks like a manufacturer's mark but different on each side. All the above textual details are my best translation from the French.



On looking back through *Hillandale News* I note that the earliest copy I have, No.173 April 1990, had an article on "Pathé Records" in Britain - Part 4" by Len Watts and Frank Andrews and it is clear that Pathé discs were certainly different.

I wonder if you can refer me to any source that will fill in the gaps in my knowledge on the discs in my possession. Also since my real interest is in early dance band and music hall records is there anybody who would be interested in the discs I have described, or are they simply an interesting curiosity?

Yours sincerely,

Gerry Stevenson, Rickmansworth, Herts.

## Filmophone records

Dear Chris,

I was particularly impressed by the letters section in the December 1992 *Hillandale News*, and I am inspired to write another letter!

Here are two questions arising from my reading an article on Filmophone records in *Hillandale News* 32 (August 1966). The article includes a list of all Filmophones available in April 1932, and details of some of the latest releases.

1) On 440, Amy Brunton (Elsie Carlisle) sings a song entitled *Balls, picnics and parties* (by Christie and Frederick). This reminds me of a song sung by engineering students at football games during my university days, namely, *Balls, banquets and parties*. This was considered (in those far off times) slightly rude, the last line being *Balls, balls, balls*. The song was sung to the tune of *Take me out to the ball game* (yes, it was a transatlantic university). Is it a coincidence, or is the Carlisle song essentially the same?

2) Surprisingly, the celebrated accompanist Gerald Moore plays on 458 (accompanying a tenor in songs by Cadman and Vaughan Williams). Moore had already recorded for HMV at least as early as 1930.

What was he doing working for Filmophone, and what other 'minor' labels did he appear on? Indeed, has anyone done a Moore discography?

Yours sincerely,

George Taylor, Harrogate, N. Yorks.

## London Meetings

Dear Chris,

It is unfortunate and I do apologise for being 'too clever by half' and misleading our Norfolk member Juliet Adams who missed my November Programme.

She makes a very valid point, which as the new London Chairman, I would like to act upon and instigate for the future, brief synopses of programmes to be advertised in this magazine in time for members to evaluate forthcoming attractions.

Meanwhile, as her interests in recording seem to be concentrated, like mine, at the dawn of this century, I offer some consolation, the loan of my notes, slides and tapes so that she might 're-create' my programme in the comfort of her own home.

Yours sincerely,

George Woolford, East Tilbury, Essex

(I am glad that action has been taken on Juliet's suggestion and as a starter I have included synopses for the programmes listed in this month's *Forthcoming Meetings* column. Ed.)

## Decimal currency and London Meetings

Dear Chris,

Firstly a comment on Ernie Bayly's letter on page 141 of *Hillandale News* 189, December 1992: I wholeheartedly agree with his sentiments. Five pence, today taking into account average wages, represents 0.017 of a penny 1904 vintage.

One shilling (five pence) now represents 0.02% of an average weekly wage, whereas in the time of cylinder records, say 1904, it represented 2 1/2%.

A translation into modern terms of what it really meant to a 1904 wage-earner to buy a two minute cylinder record costing one shilling would run as follows:

Average wage say £250; 2 1/2% of this is £6.25. Then multiply the ratio of playing time, i.e. 70 minutes of a CD against 2 minutes of a cylinder and we get £218.75 for a CD!

Let no-one say modern records are dear.

Secondly a comment on Juliet Adams' letter in the same issue of *Hillandale News*. I would support her plea for an explanation of what forthcoming programmes are about.

Another gramophone society of which I am a member publishes meaningless titles to its programmes without explanation (e.g. *Sentimental Journey* or *Idle Musings*). Let us explain ours and maybe we'll attract more members to our meetings.

Yours sincerely,

Len Watts, Twickenham, Middlesex



# REPORTS

## London Meeting 19th November 1992

On this Thursday evening Frank Andrews with *We Have Our Own Records* commenced his somewhat augmented and enlarged programme which was originally conceived in his Neasden recitals. This was the first programme (hopefully of many) which dealt, in alphabetical order, with the diverse labels of British Record Companies and some similar labels imported from abroad.

With the projector cartridge filled to capacity the audience in the darkened room was treated to illustrations of labels, a learned discourse from the table and recordings to enliven the proceedings.

To members unable to attend this splendid and well-researched project, as only could be embarked upon by Frank Andrews, your reporter can only give a glimpse of the wonderful and unusual labels encountered in the A's and B's. Some, of course, saw light under different names so Apollo, for instance, included Bell Disc, Diploma, Globaphon, Festival and Eclipse. There are at least 3 colours for Apollo labels so the reader must imagine the unseen labels illustrated, as the report would fill the whole magazine if justice was to be done to the programme.

Frank has not any of the following labels and would appreciate photographs of them for completeness' sake. Such labels were: Addison, Admiral, Admiralty, Advox, Aeonic, Ariel, A.F.W.K., Agaphone, Animal Language Record, Anonym, Artists Record Co. Ltd., Atlas, Autocycle, Babygram, Bellaphone Record, Bellerphone Record, Birleys Physical Fitness Records and Birthday Wishes. Can any member help?

The above labels were probably issued in single or few variants in design, but those of us who look for variants were not disappointed as the companies of Aeolian Vocalion, Arrow Records, Beatall, Beltona, Besttone and Billy Mayerl provided many colourful varieties as shown by the slides we saw.

Frank was unable to give demonstrations of the Animal Language record, the Arden Doorway to



Health and Beauty records or Birley's Physical Fitness records but he was able to give us illustrations and let us hear excerpts from the rare Aircraft Products Album of 6" single sided records of veteran Music Hall artists issued in 1936.

The next instalment of this fascinating discourse is eagerly awaited.

G.W.

## Midlands Group Meeting 21st November 1992

A good attendance at the Carrs Lane Methodist Centre, Birmingham included some very welcome new members. I hope they enjoyed the evening.

It is proposed to issue a new set of rules to govern the affairs of our group to ensure both the Society and individual members are protected in all dealings with outside bodies. Phil Bennett, our Secretary, issued a draft constitution which we hope to adopt at our AGM on 16th January 1993.

The group's Record Fair held in Walsall on 24th October was considered to be very successful with a useful profit from it going to boost our funds. We hope to stage a similar event early in 1993.

The evening's entertainment was given by Richard Taylor and was entitled *Jazz with Feeling*. Richard played a dozen jazz records from the 1920's and 1930's, carefully explaining 'the tingle factor' which he felt about each of them. Among the artists we heard were Jelly Roll Morton and Billie Holiday. We enjoyed a well researched and entertaining programme and we hope to entice Richard to give another programme in the same vein in the near future.

Geoff Howl



## Midlands Group Record Fair, Methodist Community Hall, Walsall, Saturday 24th October 1992

This was the second fair our Group had staged at this venue. The numbers of stall holders were up on last year and this along with the increased admission charges helped us to provide a larger surplus to boost Group funds.

About the same number of visitors turned up as last year while there was a wider and more varied range of goods for sale. The refreshments were first class and it is hoped to organise another Record Fair in the first part of next year. More details will be advertised nearer the time.

Geoff Howl

## Recital given by Midlands Group members at Sedgley Blind Institute on 1st November 1992

Mark Morgan and Geoff Howl 'flew the flag' for the Society with a programme of popular favourites, all on 78s. The small but enthusiastic audience were invited to sing along to the well-known music which was played either on a 1912 HMV wooden horn gramophone or on an HMV Model 104 Table Model.

A worthwhile project which we will do again in due course.

Geoff Howl

## Forthcoming Meetings in London

London Meetings are held at the National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, South Kensington, on the third Thursday evening of the month promptly at **6.45pm** (unless stated otherwise). Members' attention is drawn to the London Meetings Notice on page 100 of issue 188 (October 1992).

### February 18th

*Mrs and Mrs Henry Wood Re-discovered* - Jonathan Dobson will let us hear some of the records he told us about in *Hillandale News* No 187, August 1992.

### March 18th

*The Gramophone Record as an Historic Document* Part 4. Chris Hamilton discusses more documentary records from around 50 years ago.

### April 15th

Rick Hardy and Len Watts on *Nobody will notice* when they will play records issued with obvious and not so obvious mistakes in them.

### May 20th

*Feline groovy* - Peter Adamson paws his way gingerly through a (tortoise-)shellac menagerie of kittens, domestic moggies, tigers and other *felidae*: music and stories about cats of all sizes, performers with catty names or pretensions; record labels depicting cats, even recordings of cats. And finally waiving his tale, he emerges with only light surface scratches (no hair cracks, *please!*)





## REVIEWS

### Postscript to the review of THE 13<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> INCH FONOTIPIAS: A New Assessment

After I had sent in this article, I read a review of the Symposium CD by Vivian Liff (*Record Collector*, Vol.37 No.3 page 228). Mr Liff is, of course, an authority on early records, and his reviews must bear some weight. He is not impressed by this CD. He criticises the dubbings for an unusual lack of forwardness and clarity by Symposium standards, fears that certain records might have been transferred at the wrong pitch and attributes the occasional blasting to wear on the records. He feels that the bass rumble occasionally heard is unnecessary, though whether it is heard on the original is not made clear.

Yes indeed, these Symposium issues will probably receive the most severe criticism in the pages of specialist magazines like the *Record Collector* - but I do sometimes wonder whether the critic and I are listening to the same CD!

George Taylor

### UNRELEASED EDISON LATERALS 1

This CD/cassette is a collection of 21 varied popular items unreleased on Edison laterals - from test pressings? - (although they were issued on Diamond Discs, and a few on Blue Amberol too), recorded in 1928. They are thus of considerable historic, technical and musical interest. As some of the ephemeral dance tunes would have been 18 months old when the releases began, it is hard to see that these would ever have been issued (was the eventual launch delayed?).

The most striking feature is the quality of (Theodore) Edison's "needle type" recording process - an improvement on their Diamond Discs and maybe even Western Electric's on Columbia. There is plenty of bass on the originals, but Diamond Cut Produc-

tions have added a bit of echo which is noticeable on the vocals. (The Edison studios were rather "boxy" though.)

The disc starts with the top-notch Al Friedman Orchestra. The (uncredited) vocalist on *Just a night for meditation* and *Two Lips* is the Edison stalwart Theo Alban. The latter brilliantly recorded and played number (super muted trumpets) has a tempo of an incredible 62 bars per minute!

We have three numbers by the great California Ramblers - vocals by their leader Ed Kirkeby - in a (for them) restrained mood. They also play, as "The Golden Gate Orchestra", *Lover come back to me* - a strange choice for this jazz-orientated band.

There are three songs by pioneer radio artiste Vaughn de Leath accompanied by a small band or rhythmic piano. I guess it's the same pianist who accompanied Bob Pierce in *Etiquette Blues* - a comical point number.

The star track of this album is *Tell me you're sorry*, played by the Tom Timothy Orchestra with amazing attack and speed (over 60 bars per minute, against a typical 45). There is fine piano and tympani work, though some flat trombone notes! I wonder how it comes over on the Blue Amberol.

We hear Edison's exclusive, versatile and big (expensive!) dance band, the B. A. Rolfe Orchestra - not outstanding here, though there is some nice tenor sax on *Deep Hollow*. And naturally we have that accomplished (except for the clumsy drummer!) house unit, the Piccadilly Players.

The album finishes with Steel Jamison, an operetta tenor of the Webster Booth type, singing *My Arcady* - song that could easily have come from Lionel Monckton's *The Arcadians*.

This is an attractively produced CD (with the characteristic Edison electric-flash design) which every Ediphile should have. There are about 1200 more lateral matrices, so let us hope for many more volumes from Diamond Cut Productions...

This is available from Diamond Cut Productions, PO Box 305, Hibernia NJ 07842-0305, U.S.A. in both CD and Cassette formats. The CD costs **US\$19.98** and the Cassette costs **US\$13.98**, both including postage.

Paul Collenette



## THE COLLECTOR'S GUIDE TO VICTOR RECORDS by Michael W. Sherman

In the August 1988 issue of *Hillandale News* I gave a rave review to Michael Sherman's *The Paper Dog, an illustrated guide to 78 rpm Victor Record Labels from 1900 from 1958*. Now, with his 1992 update Mike Sherman has surpassed himself - quite simply the book is superb. There are four times as many pages as before and three times as many illustrations and, where appropriate, in sparkling colours. The completeness of Mike's book is underlined by an opening chapter entitled *Before the Beginning* with a comprehensive review of Berliners. The meticulous scholarship detailing and illustrating every stage in the development of Victor labels and discs will satisfy the most fastidious buffs, while for the general reader like me, the book provides a cornucopia of treasures - and what treasures! My eyes watered at the sight of a 1933 Caruso picture disc, a plaid Monarch label of 1902 and a Chinese Monarch label of 1904 with Nipper replaced by an Oriental gentleman proclaiming "Velly Good Talkee" rather than "His Master's Voice". It's certainly nice to see acknowledgement of the happy relationship between Victor and HMV but, nevertheless, surprising to see King George V and Queen Mary pictured on a Victor label - but such is the breadth of coverage of this collector's guide. The only reservation I have of the book is that while the discs are referred to throughout as '78s' in fact no speed indication of any kind appears on the relevant Victor labels. Certainly, during the acoustic era Victor recorded randomly around 75 to 76 rpm so that playback at 78 rpm, while giving performances a little more 'ping', altered vocal characteristics - *pace* Gigli.

HMV for their part put "78 rpm" on their labels irrespective of original speed of record. That said, Victor pressings were always superior to any others - the reason they are preferred now as the source for dubbing onto CD for historic re-issue. Constant improvement in the composition of the nominal 78 Victor pressings meant that from the late 1940s on, when the demise of the 78 was imminent, the Heritage Series on flexible red-coloured vinyl gave a quality of replay rarely if ever achieved today, even when using "enhanced" shellac copies in good original condition.

Michael Sherman's *Collector's Guide to Victor Records* is a work of genuine scholarship and research that is not only a good read but also a good source book by virtue of the excellence of its illustrations. It's certainly animated me to lust after a 14" Special De Luxe Victor with its 5" diameter label. That's some label and some book! I obtained my

hardback copy - \$45 - from Kurt Nauck, 6323, Inway Drive, Spring Texas 77389, U.S.A., plus \$3 for surface postage. A softback edition is available at \$29.95 exclusive of postage. Kurt Nauck and the redoubtable Bill Moran of California, by the way, collaborated with Mike Sherman in the production of this most excellent work.

Joe Pengelly

## THE "HIS MASTER'S VOICE" 'BD' SERIES

### Magenta Label Recordings

A complete listing by Michael Smith.  
Published at £12 by Tamarisk Books,  
Hastings, Sussex

The HMV BD series ran from February 1935 until the last issue in September 1955. The initial price was 1/6d which was average among its competitors for a series of 'variety' and dance music. (The author claims that 1/6d of 1935 equals 7½ pence today. This is nonsense. That reference table was only valid for a short period when Britain converted to decimal currency. It certainly has nothing to do with 1992.)

This magenta labelled series ran from BD100 to BD1340 in the 'lower numbers' for general 'variety'. Numbers BD5000 to BD6204 were used for dance bands, some of which began life in the lower numbers and a few in the plum-labelled 'B' series.

Of 150 A5-sized pages this book has the series listed numerically, showing for each record the artist, the style of performance, e.g. organ solo, soprano, etc. and then the title performed. A very large number of the composers and lyricists are given, but with the large number of reference books extant on lighter entertainment it should have been virtually all. At intervals, as appropriate, release dates are given. The second section shows the matrix numbers for each record and thirdly an alphabetic index of artists shows the catalogue numbers upon which each appears.

It is all clearly and attractively printed making it an easy tool to use. I remember the artists in the 'BD' series and saw several in the theatre or heard them in radio-performance so find it extremely interesting to see all the names laid before me indicating what a wealth of light entertainment there was. The average record-enthusiast or those wishing to own everything of a certain artist will require no more information than is contained here. Eccentric researchers will wish that every recording date had been included.

They could ALL have been obtained from the appropriate source. Similarly, ALL accompanists



could have been obtained; thus one would discover, for instance, whether Hutch was singing to his own piano accompaniment, or whether a record was one of the fewer number with orchestra. Betty Driver sometimes included jokes and patter on stage, but "Betty Driver, comedienne" could make an O.A.P. like me wonder what she did on a particular recording. Perhaps I am probing deeper into the subject than either Michael Smith or his publishers intended.....but the sub-title does say "DISCOGRAPHY" which means something more to some of us. It should have said "An EXCELLENT and EXTREMELY USEFUL listing". I look forward to the future listings we are promised for various Decca series.

Ernie Bayly

## NORTH AMERICAN PHONOGRAPH Co., EDISON WORKS

(Reprint of original cylinder record  
catalogue dated 1st November 1893 with  
an introduction by George Frow)

**This rare catalogue has printed on the cover an issue date of 1st November 1893. It contains almost 200 selections of cylinder records as manufactured by Edison Works for the North American Phonograph Company. Very few record catalogues of this vintage have survived. Such listings, when they surface, can be so easily overlooked when found, say amongst a case of cylinders.**

Edison Works first began producing entertainment cylinders for issue from May 1889 until early 1890. At that time other North American Phonograph Co. member companies, such as Columbia, New England and Louisiana were recording and supplying their own cylinders to meet a limited demand. As a result Edison Works more or less abandoned commercial cylinder record production. Allen Koenigsberg, in his book *Edison Cylinder Records 1889-1912* has these early issues well documented from the original Edison Works log book.

Around April 1892 Edison Works resumed making entertainment cylinders for the North American Phonograph Co. Production was to continue until North American's bankruptcy in 1894. During this revival period approximately 1500 titles were issued by Edison Works. To date Allen Koenigsberg has identified around 300 of the total output. As a

consequence, this reprint catalogue adds a further 200 titles to swell the list, being numbered from 600 to 802. Among the artists outlined, several were familiar recorders for many years. These include: Vess Ossman, Edward M. Favor and Billy Golden. Other artists have never before now been identified - their recording careers must surely have been brief.

The catalogue was originally on a pale pink card. This reprint is on pale yellow card of the same weight as pink was not available; also the third page of the original catalogue was printed from a damaged plate, leaving three or four blank areas. However, with care, all titles can be identified. There are a couple of small printing errors within the listing. Record number 806 *Maid of the Mill* sung by the Unique Quartette should, in fact, be numbered 800. Also, with regard to record number 773 *The Maiden and the Lamb* sung by Edward M. Favor, I have a copy of the actual cylinder. It is announced, and supported by a title slip, as *Mary and the Lamb*. There is just one number that clashes with the listing in *Edison Cylinder records 1889-1912*. Allen Koenigsberg lists record number 600 as *Safe in the Harbor* sung by Joseph Natus. The November 1893 catalogue allocates number 600 to *My Sweetheart When a Boy* sung by Mart Stevens.

Edison Works cylinders from this early period are now rare to find in good playing condition. They are of brown wax, usually of a dark chocolate colour, although lighter shades are known. From mid-1891 Edison Works were producing cylinders having a channelled rim. The intention of the rim was to accommodate a paper ring showing the title. This was not very successful as the paper ring did not adhere too well against the wax. Some cylinders that I have examined show moulded titles within the rim. The recording grooves are so shallow that they are barely discernible. These cylinders could well have been moulded, as Edison Works were at this time (1891) experimenting with moulding techniques. The moulded cylinder period was indeed brief. It was to be a further decade before moulded Edison cylinders reached the market. Channelled rim cylinders, without titles, continued to be produced by Edison Works until 1894. Other North American member companies such as Columbia, Louisiana, New England and New Jersey also issued some of their recordings on channelled rim blanks. In Britain some of the earliest issues of the London Phonograph Company (after 1894) have been found on channelled rim blanks.

These may have been used from bankrupt stocks or shaved down from ex-North American supplies. It must be pointed out that not all of the Edison Works cylinders manufactured between 1891-1894 were of the channelled rim type. Some cylinders continued to be issued on the more familiar standard type blanks.



A rather surprising feature of many Edison Works cylinders issued between 1892-1894 is that they contain the record catalogue number in the spoken announcement. Some announcements do not mention either the number or company of origin, and can only be attributed to Edison Works by the support of a surviving numbered title slip. Typical spoken announcements for the 1892-4 period are as follows:

"Edison Record 772, *The Commodore Song* from Ship-Ahoy, as sung by the original Commodore, Mr Edward M. Favor, now of Rice's 1492 Company."

"Edison Record 1419, Ballet music selection from the opera *Le Prophète*, played by the popular 23rd Regiment band of New York, conducted by Mr A. D. Fohs."

"The latest popular ballad entitled *Sweet Marie* sung by Mr Edward M. Favor of Rice's 1492 Company."

Title slips for this period are as illustrated:

TYPE A (early type). Printed in black on white paper with hand written titles.

TYPE B (later type). All details rubber-stamped in mauve ink on white card.

The price of records as outlined on the front cover of the catalogue states:

\$1.00 each for "plain number" records

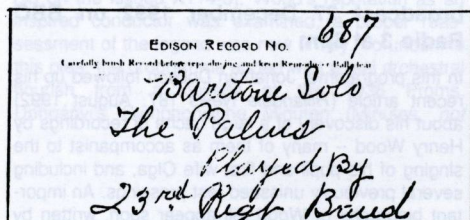
\$1.50 each for "B number" records

Only Edward M. Favor is allocated a prefix 'B' number in this catalogue. Other Favor cylinders have been noted where the title slip shows a prefix 'B' number. Maybe Edward M. Favor demanded a higher recording fee that resulted in a more expensive product.

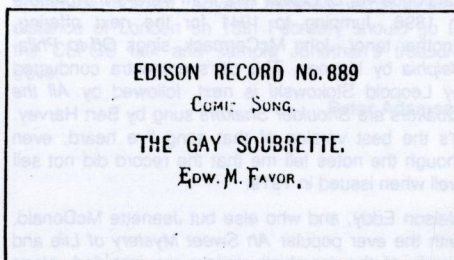
Thanks to Symposium Records for making this rare and most welcome reprint available. Collectors and researchers of early Edison material are strongly recommended to purchase this catalogue.

Copies are available from: **Symposium Records**, 110, Derwent Avenue, East Barnet, Hertfordshire EN4 8LZ, U.K. Cost **£1.00** plus **25 pence** postage (UK), **50 pence** (Europe), **£1.20** (outside Europe).

John S. Dale



Type A - Early (original size 4 1/2" x 2")



Type B - Late (original size 4" x 2 1/8")



## PHILADELPHIA ALL THE TIME

### Sounds of Quaker City

#### 1896-1947

What does a *Soliloquy from Hamlet*, *All the Quakers are Shoulder Shakers* and *The Wild Dog* have in common? The answer is simple enough. The three are included in a nice new cassette and book presentation from **Spinning Disc Productions** entitled *Philadelphia all the Time - Sounds of Quaker City 1896-1947*. I always think of Philadelphia as the home of the finest handsaws made at Henry Disston's Keystone Sawworks. But that city has many things more - it is home to the Liberty Bell, a treasured relic of early days. There is a growing interest in local history and I am glad to see cassette tapes being backed up with books containing interesting facts and photographs.

*Philadelphia all the Time* is a collection of 21 'Phily' related recordings. In some cases the artists themselves are natives of that city while in others the lyrics in some form embrace the city of brotherly love.

Item one, side one is a real early one. Italian tenor Ferruccio Giannini, who was a music teacher in the city, committed his voice to Berliner's first American catalogue via *Di Quella Pira* from Verdi's *Il Trovatore* in 1896. Jumping to 1941 for the next offering, another tenor, John McCormack, sings *Off to Philadelphia* by Haynes. The city's orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski is next, followed by *All the Quakers are Shoulder Shakers* sung by Bert Harvey. It's the best version of that song I've heard, even though the notes tell me that the record did not sell well when issued in 1919.

Nelson Eddy, and who else but Jeanette McDonald, with the ever popular *Ah Sweet Mystery of Life* and bands of the marching variety are included, along with the Fireman's and Rapid Transport outfits and Arthur Pryor's Band. I must admit that the Ferko String Band takes my vote for a really great *Oh Dem Golden Slippers* recorded in 1947.

The music of black Philadelphia has such stars as Marian Anderson (1923), Bessie Smith (1929) and Ethel Waters in her version of *Dinah* from 1925.

Hot jazz has Clarence Williams and his Orchestra with Charlie Gaines on trumpet. Howard Lanin's Orchestra, Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, Jan Savitt and the Top Hatters are all there.

On a serious note there is the spoken word from John Barrymore, W. C. Fields and *Acres of Diamonds* by Russell Conway from one of Homer Rodeheaver's 'Rainbow' labelled discs

The book is of 50 pages and has many interesting pictures and facts. I didn't realise that McCormack's *Star Spangled Banner* of 1917 was the fastest selling Victor of its time (250,000 copies in one month) or that Pryor's Band had more than 5000 takes between 1903 and 1924.

Here is a chance to hear several rare records, eleven re-issued for the first time, all worth hearing. At times the surface noise was a little high; on my equipment Dolby B is suggested. I would have expected to see one of the earliest labels of the 'Improved Gramophone Record' of the Consolidated Talking Machine Company of Philadelphia to be shown. Produced by David Goldenberg and Charles Hardy it is available from [redacted] Rydal, Pa 19046, U.S.A. at **US\$13.95** local or **US\$14.95** post paid outside U.S.A.

Michael Hegarty

## NEW WOOD FROM OLD TIMBER

**broadcast 27 December 1992 on BBC  
Radio 3 at 6pm**

In this programme, Jonathan Dobson followed up his recent article (*Hillandale News* 187, August 1992) about his discovery of a large cache of recordings by Henry Wood -- many of them as accompanist to the singing of his pupil and first wife Olga, and including several previously unissued test pressings. An important biography of Wood will appear soon, written by Arthur Jacobs, who explained that Olga (Mikhailov), the daughter of the Russian Princess Urussov, had been previously married to a solicitor named Hillman before marrying Wood in 1898. Mrs Henry Wood was launched on the air-waves (appropriately) with Mendelssohn's *On wings of song*, sung in German [matrix 8802e, 17 Jul 1908, unissued]; we next heard an aria from Debussy's *L'enfant prodigue* [2529f, 17 Jul 08, uniss.] -- a record which prompted Alan Blyth to comment on her unusual repertoire and her use of original languages. Her singing had attracted generally favourable notices, referring to her charm and



intelligence. Some of her studio recordings apparently betray a tendency to strain on high notes, but Eric Coates' *Orpheus with his lute* [10221e, 4 June 09, GC-3835] showed great ease. Alan Blyth noted the quality of her English; he could almost forget she was Russian. Next came a particularly beautiful record of Arthur Somervell's unusual lullaby *Sleep, baby, sleep* [10220e, 4 Jun 09, GC-3834]. In utter contrast, we were assailed by the amazing sound of Sir Henry singing (in a deliberately over-blown manner) Schumann's *The lotus flower* [3107f, 4 Jun 09, uniss.]. This showed inherent good humour and, as Blyth said, had rather more "heart" than Santley or Edward Lloyd would have displayed. To put the whole set of acoustic recordings into perspective, Chris Hamilton (your Editor) made a surprise appearance, explaining the techniques required in order to commit a performance to wax (without overloading).

Sir Henry's 1930s orchestral recordings made for Decca are not common; but here we were able to hear fascinating examples of *unissued* takes. We were plunged into a Henry Wood rehearsal -- an excerpt leading up to variation 7 from Dvorák's *Symphonic Variations* [in issued form on X182-4]; Wood was taut and intensely committed in his control of the proceedings. With *Dorabella* from Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, Alan Blyth was able to illustrate his preference for the gentle reticence of the unissued version over the more forceful issued take [side 4 of K837-40] -- each beautiful in its own way. After a vigorous unissued excerpt from the fourth movement of Vaughan Williams' *London Symphony* [s8 on the issued X114-8], Wood's reputation as an inspired conductor was examined; a proper reassessment of the legend was now timely. To underline this plea, the programme ended with a real orchestral flourish from a novelty of the 1936 Proms. Dohnányi's *Symphonische Minuten* (Minutes. *not*

*Minuets*!) -- the final, breathtaking *Rondo*. In this unissued take, Sir Henry whizzes through the last section even more precipitately than he does in the issued version [s4 on X190-1]. The orchestra came a bit unstuck -- but what a wonderful way to go...

The basic sound extracted from the various discs seemed excellent. However the sound quality as *broadcast* showed some evidence of the BBC's latest tendency to use excessive average modulation levels, with noticeable compression and an uncomfortable instability in any background noise. The problem has become worse recently, no doubt in deference to the opposing commercial broadcasters' "up-front" sound, and bodes ill for British radio sound quality. That of course is hardly the fault of the producer; but why the extraordinary monkeying with the volume level of the otherwise exciting Dohnányi? This ended at least 6dB *quieter* than it started, which is ridiculous!

But the overriding impression of this programme was of so *many* goodies packed into only half an hour -- the producer Daniel Snowman should be congratulated for his tight editing. Jonathan's pleasantly engaging North Country presentation was well modulated and paced, avoiding any suggestion of dry academicism. We will soon be celebrating the centenary of Sir Henry's great achievement, the Promenade Concerts, and he would surely have been touched to know that the memory of his beloved Olga was to be resurrected at such an opportune moment. Anyone remotely within striking distance of London on 18th February should go to the CLPGS talk and sample Jonathan's treasure trove.

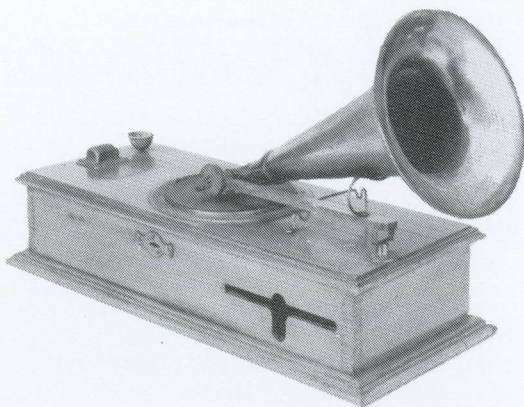
Peter Adamson

## PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS by George Frow

A friend has kindly forwarded me a cutting from the *St. Andrews Citizen* of December 21st 1990 recording the death of Miss Caroline Ketelbey at the age of 94 and the youngest of a Birmingham musical family that included an older brother Albert. Albert Ketelbey had his centenary marked in 1975 and this prompted Miss Ketelbey to research the family history, resulting in two volumes at the age of 87. Miss Ketelbey was formerly a lecturer in History at St. Andrews University and of international prominence in her province.

However the odd part of the story is that reference books give Albert Ketelbey's family name as William Aston, so perhaps when he turned the others did too. The two volumes would tell us that, wouldn't they?





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